

# **Fact Sheet**

## **AB 2337 (Beall)**

### **Child Abuse mandated reporting for Alcohol and Drug Abuse counselors**

#### **PROBLEM**

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Substance abuse is found to be evident in over two-thirds of child abuse and domestic violence cases. Yet the front line treatment professionals -- alcoholism and drug abuse counselors -- are not required to report suspected child abuse. All other professional categories working with families in crisis are required to report because no child should be left in a violent environment. AB 2337 promotes safety and security for children in peril and minimizes liability exposure for counselors wanting to safeguard children.

#### **THIS BILL**

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Assembly Bill (AB) 2337 adds alcohol and drug counselors to the list of individuals who are mandated child abuse reporters.

The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act requires a mandated reporter, as defined, to report whenever he or she, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect.

This bill would require alcohol and drug abuse counselors to abide by the same reporting laws applied to other mental health professionals.

#### **SUMMARY**

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The changes made by AB 2337 do not create any new programs or costly bureaucracies. It simply places addiction counselors in the same safety net as Boy Scout leaders, teachers, daycare providers, fire fighters and all medical and mental health providers. AB 2337 safeguards children at risk of abuse, reduces

counselors' liability exposure, promotes recovery and has no state costs.

As is the case for all currently mandated child abuse reporters, alcoholism and drug abuse counselors will be insulated from liability claims because their actions are compelled by state law.

Immediate intervention for families in violent environments speeds the help they may need with issues of substance abuse. A teamwork approach that involves addiction treatment and social services has been shown to be the most effective way to encourage long term recovery.

#### **STATUS/VOTES**

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The bill is scheduled for hearing on March 25, 2008 in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.

#### **SPONSORS**

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California Association of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC)

California Association of Alcohol and Drug Educators (CAADE)

#### **SUPPORT**

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California Association of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC)

California Association of Alcohol and Drug Educators (CAADE)

#### **OPPOSITION**

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None